

CHARLES TAYLOR MASTER MECHANIC'S AWARD

**Fairbanks Flight Standards District
Office Honoree 2001**

THOMAS FREDRICK BROWN



BROWN, Thomas Frederick. On March 25, 1930, Thomas was born in St. Ignatius, on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. He remembers one day at the age of eight, during a family outing, he was given a chance to do one of two things. He could go to the circus or take an airplane ride; he chose the airplane ride in a J-3 Cub.

In 1946, he started flying lessons in Aronca and Piper PA-12 aircraft while working at the Plains, Montana airport. He worked at the airport fueling and cleaning aircraft in exchange for the flying lessons. He got his pilot certificate in 1948 at the age of eighteen.

Thomas joined the United States Air Force in 1950 and tried to get into flying, but was not accepted. He served in Texas and Greenland until 1954. Following his Air Force service, he attended aircraft mechanic school at the Northrup Aeronautical Institute in Inglewood, California. That was 1954 and was also the same year he married his girlfriend, Cora. They now have three children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

In 1956, Thomas got his Power plant Mechanic Certificate, while working at the Livermore Airport in the San Francisco area. While still working

there, he got his Airframe Mechanic Certificate in 1957. During the period, late 1950's to 1969, he worked for several operators in the California area. He worked on the Sikorsky S-61 helicopters for Los Angeles and San Francisco Helicopters, also Beechcraft Aircraft in Sacramento.

In 1969, he and his wife flew to Fairbanks, Alaska, aboard a Wien Airlines' Boeing 737, and they made their new home there. He went to work for Fairbanks-based Merric Helicopters, working on Hiller models at their North Slope and Point Barrow stations. At Point Barrow, he worked at the old naval hangar at the point. He also worked part-time for Frontier Airlines in Fairbanks and Interior Airways until their hangar burned.

In 1972, he went to work for Alaska International Air doing maintenance on their Lockheed Hercules fleet. At one point, he worked at their Ice Island Station when it was floating about 300 miles south of the North Pole. He was injured there in a fall, requiring time off to convalesce.

From 1975-1980, Thomas worked as a driver on the TransAlaska Pipeline construction and did small aircraft maintenance during his time off. In 1985, he retired from full-time work, but is still doing maintenance on his own aircraft, a Mooney, and his friend's aircraft. In 1995, he rebuilt his son-in-law's aircraft engine.

Thomas and his wife, Cora, still reside in Fairbanks, but do spend part of the winter now in Arizona. When there, he still works on aircraft of friends at the local airport.